



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: December 23, 2008

Release Number: 08-126

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SBA Expands Emerging 200 Initiative to 15 Cities as First Group of Executives Complete Innovative New Program

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration’s innovative Emerging 200 initiative will be expanded in the spring of 2009 to include five new cities – Detroit, Dallas, Denver, Jacksonville, and Portland, Ore. – SBA Acting Administrator Sandy K. Baruah announced today.

The announcement comes as 200 executives of inner-city small businesses in the first Emerging 200 class are graduating in 10 U.S. cities - Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Memphis, Atlanta, Chicago, Milwaukee, Albuquerque, New Orleans, and Des Moines – over the next few weeks.

“We launched the Emerging 200 initiative to identify and support inner-city small businesses that have substantial potential for growth and provide them with high-level training, networking, and other resources necessary for success,” said Baruah. “By helping them prepare for the challenges of today’s economy, SBA is tapping into the power of local entrepreneurs to transform their communities, generate new jobs, and make real and lasting changes.”

Small business executives in the Emerging 200 initiative participate in an intensive and comprehensive program, draw from each other’s experiences and expertise, develop connections with local capital providers, and complete a growth plan by the end of the program.

“I cannot say enough about how valuable this class has been,” said Kelly Sargent, president of Brainstorm Marketing in Des Moines, Iowa. “This class has given me the knowledge, courage, and access to experts and 19 other CEOs who face the same challenges I do. I highly recommend e200 to any business owner regardless of the size of the company or longevity.”

The growth of small businesses in underserved markets is a prime focus of the SBA. Increasingly, the delivery of SBA products and services to inner-city entrepreneurs has become a high priority for the agency and part of a long-term strategy to sustain and stimulate economic activity.

In October 2007, SBA commissioned the Initiative for a Competitive Inner-City (ICIC), led by Harvard Business School Professor Michael E. Porter, to identify the nation’s largest inner city areas (40,000+ inner city jobs) that have experienced flat or negative compound annual job growth rates in recent years.

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Based on this study, SBA selected a representative cross-section of these cities to participate in the Emerging 200 based on the cities' interest, demonstrated support from the local community, and capacity to support the effort with SBA District office staff and in-kind support from resource partners. After identifying these inner city areas, SBA also collaborated with ICIC and its network of economic development researchers to establish criteria for the types of businesses that would benefit most from Emerging 200.

“Clearly, small businesses are the ones creating employment opportunities in inner city communities throughout our country,” said Jeffrey R. Andrade, associate administrator, Office of Entrepreneurial Development. “With the leadership of the Emerging 200, SBA is helping to build a sustainable network of dynamic growing companies in areas that have not experienced job growth for several years.”

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NOTE TO MEDIA: For further details or to arrange media interviews with SBA officials regarding the SBA Emerging 200 initiative, or the owners or representatives of some of the graduating small businesses, please contact Dennis Byrne at (202) 205-6567 or e-mail dennis.byrne@sba.gov